SPIDER-GWEN: SHADOW CLONES

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WHEN TEENAGER GWEN STACY SUITS UP IN HER SYNTHETIC SYMBIOTIC SUIT, SHE GAINS AMAZING POWERS: A PRECOGNITIVE AWARENESS OF DANGER, ADHESIVE FINGERTIPS AND TOES AND THE PROPORTIONAL SPEED AND STRENGTH OF A SPIDER. NOW SHE USES HER POWERS FOR GOOD AS THE SUPER HERO CALLED GHOST-SPIDER. BUT YOU KNOW HER AS…

SPIDER-GWEN: SHADOW CLONES

RECENTLY, GWEN HAD A RUN-IN WITH THE DISPLACED SINISTER SIX OF EARTH-616, BUT SHE WAS SUCCESSFUL IN SENDING THEM BACK TO THEIR OWN DIMENSION. UNFORTUNATELY, THANKS TO A DELAYED VULTURE BOMB, A CITIZEN, DOCTOR LEE BENNETT, DIED.

MONTHS LATER, GHOST-SPIDER RAN INTO CLONES OF HERSELF, MIXED WITH DOC OCK AND SANDMAN! THE ORIGINAL GWEN FREED THE CLONES FROM THE MIND CONTROL THEY WERE UNDER, BUT ALL THREE OF THEM WERE CAPTURED BY THREE MORE CLONES AND TURNED OVER TO THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE CLONING OPERATION, DOCTOR LYLA BENNETT!

INCENSED AT THE LOSS OF HER HUSBAND, LYLA USED FUNDS AND SCHEMATICS FROM STARK ENTERPRISES TO CREATE A MULTIDIMENSIONAL TRANSMITTER AND LURE GWEN TO HER CEMETERY LAIR. WITH ALL THE PIECES IN PLACE, SHE REVEALED HER WARPED DESIRE: TO MURDER EVERY GWEN STACY IN THE MULTIVERSE!

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LYLA'S HIDDEN BUNKER BENEATH THE NEW YORK STATE CEMETERY.

WAUMP

NAP TIME, HORN HEAD.

RHI-GWEN WON'T BE OUT FOR LONG.

THEN WE BETTER FIND GWEN QUICKLY.

HEARD YOU WERE LOOKING FOR A GWEN?

WELL, YOU'VE FOUND A COUPLE.

YOU GUYS REALIZE WE SHOULD ALL BE ON THE SAME SIDE, RIGHT?!

OF COURSE THEY DON'T. WE GOTTA REMOVE THEIR HALOS!

NO TIME FOR THAT--WE HAVE TO GET TO GWEN!

A LITTLE K.O. OUGHTA STALL THEM!

HURRY! THEY'LL COME AROUND BEFORE LONG.

HOLY...

IS THAT ME...AT A RODEO?!

FORGET THAT... I THINK I SEE ONE WHERE I'M THE *PRESIDENT!*

UNGRATEFUL WRETCHES.

YOU WOULDN'T EVEN BE ***ALIVE*** IF IT WASN'T FOR ME.

NO...

I'LL GET HER AWAY FROM THE CONTROL PANEL! YOU FIND A WAY TO FREE GWEN!

BZZZT

ACK!

UH...A LITTLE HELP? WHAT DO I DO?

RELEASE GWEN!

EXCEPT THERE'S NO BIG RED BUTTON THAT SAYS "RELEASE GWEN."

THEN TRY ANYTHING!

JUST SMASH IT!

RIGHT. SMASH.

CRASH

THANK GOD...

CATCH YOUR BREATH, BUT DON'T TAKE TOO LONG. IT'S NOT OVER YET...

BUT IT WILL BE SOON.

THE TRANSMITTER ALREADY FINISHED SCANNING YOUR BIOENERGY SIGNATURE, GWEN. IT'S LOCKING ONTO ALL THE OTHER GWENS IN THE MULTIVERSE.

NOW I JUST NEED TO SEND THE KILL SIGNAL.

AND MY GWENS WILL MAKE SURE YOU DON'T GET IN MY WAY.

A GWEN REMATCH... SOMETHING I COULD'VE DONE WITHOUT.

GAH! SHE'S... ALMOST... THERE!

CRSHH

AGH!

I'LL KEEP HER GROUNDED.

IF SHE SENDS THAT KILL SIGNAL, YOU DUMMIES ARE GOING TO DIE ALONGSIDE US!

THEY WON'T LISTEN-- THEY'RE STILL HALOED!

SNAP

GWEN OCK, I NEED A BOOST. THINK OF MONKEY BARS.

YEAH, MONKEY BARS OF DEATH!

SANDGWEN! LYLA AT TWO O'CLOCK!

ON IT!

ARGH!

OOOOF!

KEEP HER OCCUPIED, THANKS!

WHY AM I ALWAYS THE BAIT?!

HNN.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

RHINOGWEN IS CONFUSED...

WE GOT ALL THEIR HALOS...

FINALLY!

HMMMMMMM

AHHH!

I HAVE TO STOP--THE SIGNAL...

I HAVE TO DESTROY THE TRANSMITTER--GOD, THIS HURTS LIKE #@$%.

HN!

NOT SO FAST.

NICE TRY. BUT EVEN IF YOU'D SUCCEEDED, THE TRANSMITTER HAS BUILT-IN REDUNDANCIES.

IF ANY ONE PART IS DAMAGED, BACKUP SYSTEMS TAKE OVER.

IT WOULD REQUIRE THE SIMULTANEOUS FAILURES OF MULTIPLE SYSTEMS TO HAVE ANY NOTICEABLE EFFECT.

HUH?

THE SIGNAL SHOULD COMPLETE ITS JOB IN A FEW SECONDS, AND GWENS EVERYWHERE WILL BE DEAD. BUT YOU? I'LL FINISH ***YOU*** OFF MYSELF.

NO!

YOU CLONES WERE CLEARLY A MISTAKE.

SANDGWEN...

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE-- HUH?

CRSHAW

MULTIPLE REDUNDANCIES, HUH? GOOD THING WE'VE GOT A **MULTITASKER** ON HAND.

NO...

SHE'S CAUSING A MASSIVE ENERGY FEEDBACK.

BUT THAT'LL KILL HER.

HNNN.

GWEN OCK! YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF THERE!

NO CAN DO. THIS IS AN ALL-TENTACLES-ON-DECK KIND OF SITUATION.

NO, NO, NO.

KRRSSSHHH

BOOM

=COFF=
=COFF=

GWEN OCK? GWEN OCK, WHERE ARE YOU?!

GWEN OCK!

YOU DID IT. YOU SAVED US ALL.

HEY... DID WE DO IT?

WE DID IT.

AND LYLA? WHERE'S LYLA?

SHE'S...SHE'S GONE.

THIS IS ALL MY FAULT. THIS HAPPENS TO PEOPLE AROUND ME. PEOPLE GET HURT BECAUSE OF ME.

LYLA'S RIGHT...I *AM* THE VILLAIN.

LISTEN, KID. WE'RE NOT PLAYING MONOPOLY HERE. WE'RE FIGHTING FOR THE FATE OF THE WORLD--OF MULTIPLE EARTHS.

WITH STAKES THAT HIGH, PEOPLE ARE GOING TO GET HURT. NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY.

WHAT MAKES YOU A ***HERO*** ISN'T JUST ABOUT WHICH SIDE YOU FIGHT ON. IT'S ABOUT CONTINUING TO FIGHT, KNOWING YOU HAVE TO BEAR THAT PAIN.

IT'S THE HARDEST THING TO DO. BUT THAT'S WHY YOU SHOULDN'T DO IT ALONE. WE'RE STRONGER ***TOGETHER***--I SEE THAT NOW.

AND YOU'RE GOING TO RESIST THAT. I KNOW BECAUSE I KNOW YOU. I *AM* YOU. BUT CLONE OR NOT, WE CAN ALL OVERCOME OUR PROGRAMMING.

I MEAN, WHO WOULD'VE THOUGHT I'D END UP BEING FRIENDS WITH TWO DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF *ME?*

SO FIND THAT STRENGTH. FIND YOUR PEOPLE. WHETHER IT'S WITH YOUR CLONES OR SOMEONE ELSE.

AND IF THEY GET HURT? BECAUSE OF ME?

THEN YOU KEEP GOING. BECAUSE THAT'S THE PRICE YOU PAY AS GHOST-SPIDER. BUT IF ANYONE CAN HANDLE IT, IT'S GWEN STACY.

BENN

YOU'RE NOT A VILLAIN. BUT WE ALL HAVE A LITTLE BAD IN US.

WHO SAYS THAT'S SO WRONG?

A FEW DAYS LATER.

IF SHE WERE HERE RIGHT NOW, SHE'D SAY THIS WHOLE THING WAS BORING.

AND THAT WE OUGHT TO BE OUT KICKING SOME BAD-GUY ASS.

SHE'S PROBABLY RIGHT.

YOU'RE ALL WELCOME TO CRASH WITH ME FOR A FEW DAYS. JUST TO GET ON YOUR FEET, FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO.

THOUGH IT MIGHT MAKE MY DAD'S HEAD EXPLODE.

ARE YOU KIDDING? NOTHING CAN SHOCK HIM MORE THAN WHEN WE DYED OUR HAIR GREEN FRESHMAN YEAR.

OR WHEN WE GOT THAT NOSE PIERCING. THE ONE HE MADE US TAKE OUT A DAY LATER.

THANKS, BUT I THINK I NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHO I AM OUTSIDE OF BEING YOUR CLONE.

WHICH MEANS GETTING AWAY FROM YOU. NO OFFENSE.

YEAH. NEW GWEN, NEW LIFE.

YOU'RE LEAVING TOO?

THEY'RE RIGHT. WE CAN'T STAY IN YOUR SHADOW. AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO HANG AROUND, I CAN'T JUST BE A SUPPORTING CHARACTER IN YOUR STORY.

BUT IF YOU'RE EVER FEELING LIKE YOU'RE ALONE...YOU'VE GOT MY NUMBER. I'LL COME RUNNING.

THE NEXT DAY.

GWEN!

GAH! MJ!

ALL MY PLANTS ARE DEAD. DRY AS PAPER. I DON'T THINK YOU WATERED THEM **AT ALL** WHILE I WAS GONE.

ER. I WATERED THEM. ONCE...

THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY? NO "I HAD TO SAVE THE WORLD" EXCUSES?

UH...WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?

I MISSED YOU.

WOW. YOU MUST'VE GOTTEN **REALLY** LONELY WHILE WE WERE GONE.

ACTUALLY, NO. SOME PEOPLE I MET REMINDED ME WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO HAVE FRIENDS. AND I WANT THAT AGAIN.

AND I'M SORRY ABOUT THE PLANTS.

EH, THAT'S OKAY. ABOUT TIME I GOT SOME NEW ONES ANYWAY.

LATER.

YOU SURE YOU DON'T HAVE HOMEWORK YOU SHOULD BE DOING RIGHT NOW?

I'VE ALREADY FINISHED ALL MY HOMEWORK FOR THE REST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

CAN YOU DO MY ASSIGNMENTS?

I DON'T CONDONE CHEATING.

'COURSE YOU DON'T.

LISTEN, REED, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO SAY I'M SORRY-- FOR GETTING YOU KIDNAPPED.

BENNE

SOMETIMES I THINK THAT I SHOULD COME WITH A WARNING LABEL, LIKE THE KIND YOU FIND ON PRESCRIPTION DRUGS.

"HANGING OUT WITH GWEN MAY BE ACCOMPANIED BY DIZZINESS, NAUSEA AND OCCASIONAL ABDUCTION.

"AND IN SEVERE CASES... DEATH."

SO, YOU'RE SAYING BEING YOUR FRIEND COMES WITH RISKS?

YEAH. AND SO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE AN OUT. JUST SAY THE WORD AND I'LL BE OUT OF YOUR LIFE.

GWEN, I'M NOT GOING TO LIVE IN FEAR OF WHAT COULD HAPPEN.

AND IF YOU WANT ME TO DO THE MATH, THAT'S A PRETTY SIMPLE RISK-TO-REWARD RATIO CALCULATION.

FRIENDS NEVER CEASE TO SURPRISE ME.

I ALWAYS EXPECT THEM TO UP AND VANISH. LIKE A PLANT YOU FORGET TO WATER.

(WHICH REMINDS ME: BUY MJ A NEW ORCHID.)

BUT THEY'RE HARDIER THAN PLANTS AND COME WITH MORE BENEFITS. THEY PUSH YOU OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE. LIKE MAKING YOU ASK OUT A BOY YOU LIKE...

MY BET'S ON BLONDIE!

THIS CAN'T BE ALL YOU GOT! HAHA!

THEY CAN BE YOUR STRENGTH.

THE GRAND CANYON...IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

OR GIVE YOU A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE. HELP YOU SEE THINGS FROM A NEW ANGLE.

THEY DON'T HAVE TO KNOW YOU AS WELL AS A CLONE...

TIME FOR YOUR LUNCH, BUDDY.

PURR

...YOU JUST HAVE TO BE WILLING TO LET THEM BE A PART OF YOUR LIFE.

THANK YOU SO MUCH... IT'S MY FIRST APARTMENT.

THERE ARE GOING TO BE MORE LOSSES. I KNOW THAT NOW...

HUNTING DOWN LYLA IS GOING TO BE A DANGEROUS GAME. SHE'S MADE IT CLEAR SHE'S WILLING TO HURT PEOPLE TO GET TO ME.

I CAN'T LET THAT STOP ME. I HAVE TO KEEP GOING...I HAVE TO KEEP GETTING BETTER.

MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE BADDER.

AFTER ALL...IF THERE'S ANYTHING I'VE LEARNED FROM THIS, IT'S THAT WE *ALL* HAVE A LITTLE *VILLAIN* IN US.

WHO SAYS THAT'S SO WRONG?

END.